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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRIEFING PAPER

EXCISE

83

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TRANSITION PAPER

NORTH-SOUTH SUMMIT

Issue

At the initiative of Mexico and Austria, the Foreign Ministers of 11 countries (Algeria, Austria, Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Sweden, Tanzania, and Yugoslavia) agreed in Vienna on November 8, 1980 to hold a North-South Summit meeting in early June 1981 in Mexico. The genesis of the idea for this Summit came in the Brandt Commission Report issued in December 1979, and Mexico and Austria seized upon the idea as a way to speed up progress on negotiations on North-South issues.

The Summit will not be a negotiating forum but rather an exchange of views. Its proponents believe that by bringing together leaders for informal, comprehensive and adequately prepared discussions on the major issues of economic cooperation and development, they can improve understanding and find areas in which to concentrate North-South efforts in the future. Many participants also believe that the Summit would facilitate progress in the projected Global Negotiations, although the Summit will have no formal link to these negotiations. [redacted] B1, A5

The Foreign Ministers of the organizing countries will next meet in Vienna from March 13-15, 1981 to assess the current state of progress in the North-South dialogue and to confirm the convening of the meeting, define the main topics, and finalize the list of participants and preparations for the meeting. If, however, the Global Negotiations process falters, the Ministers may meet before March to assess prospects for the Summit.

An invitation for the Summit will be issued to the U.S. with Mexico and Canada charged with follow-up responsibility. The other invitees are likely to include:

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a. From the developed world: UK, France, FRG, Sweden, Austria, Japan and Canada (all these countries have agreed to attend).

b. Latin America: Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, and Guyana.

c. Africa: Algeria, Nigeria, Tanzania and Ivory Coast.

d. Asia: India, Bangladesh, a Southeast Asian country, probably the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia. Saudi participation is greatly desired, but it is unclear they will attend. The attitude of other OPEC countries, aside from Algeria and Venezuela, is also unclear.

e. Communist countries: There is some sentiment to include representatives of these countries [redacted] 1,A5

f. Others: Yugoslavia

Italy and Australia are under consideration as possible additional participants with an eventual invitation to Australia seen likely. Both countries would attend if invited.

The decision to hold the Summit in early June was made for several reasons: to give the incoming Reagan Administration sufficient time to organize for participation in the meeting; to follow the French elections in May; and to precede the Ottawa Summit of developed countries later in June, which will focus on North-South economic issues.

Timing

The decision on U.S. participation in the Summit should be made prior to the March preparatory meeting of Foreign Ministers.

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U.S. Position

In all discussions to date on the North-South Summit, the U.S. has taken the position that it would be very difficult for the President of the United States to attend a Summit meeting unless it is clear that it will result in important progress on substantive issues. Such substantive progress would probably require early positive action in the various ongoing discussions and negotiations including those in the World Bank and Global Negotiations. Attendance by the President might create expectations that could not be fulfilled. We do not want a situation to arise in which the U.S. would be blamed for the shortfall.

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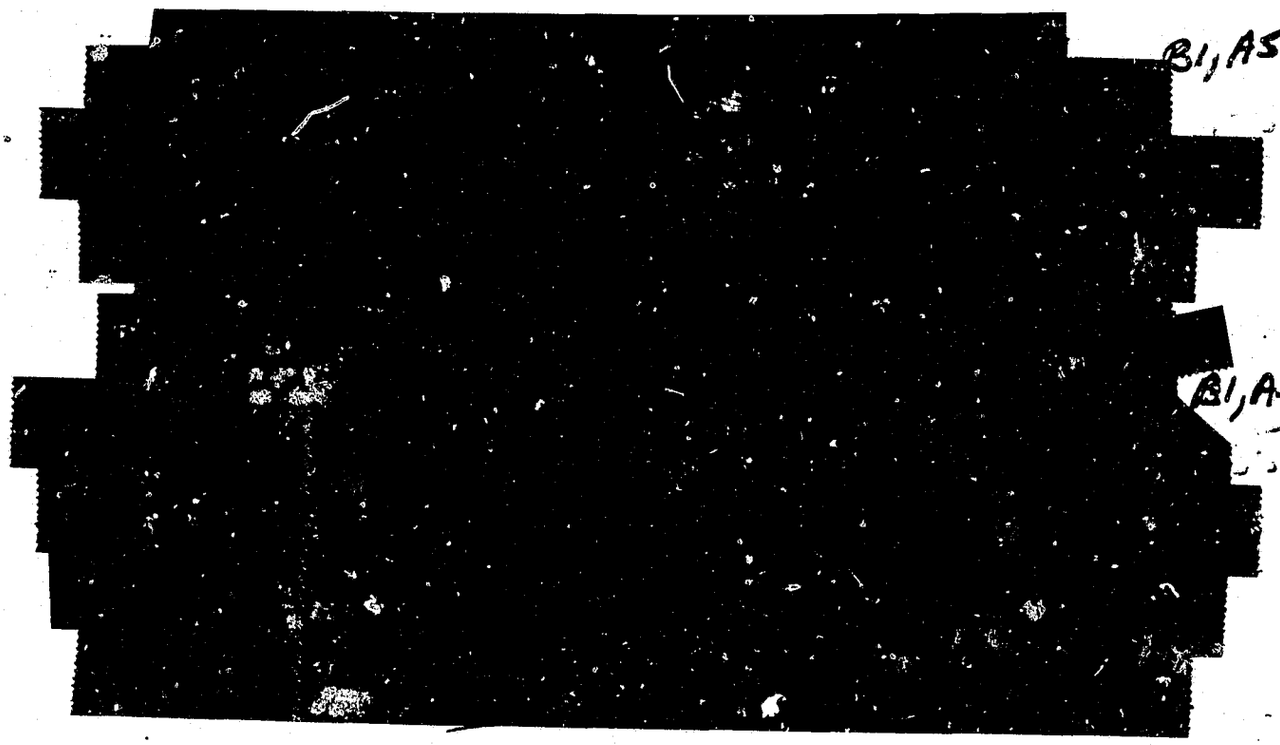
a site, "bearing in mind" the offer made by Cuba. Since that time, every important UNCTAD meeting has considered the question of the venue of UNCTAD VI. With considerable effort, the U.S. successfully got the decision deferred at the 21st TDB held in September 1980. At the close of the session, however, we narrowly avoided a G-77 statement for the record endorsing Havana as the site of the 1983 Conference. For this reason, we believe it almost certain that the issue will be finally resolved at the 22nd TDB session in Geneva scheduled for March 1981.

U.S. Position



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